From: SMTP%"coins-errors@cobra.uni.edu" 2-JUN-1994 18:01:04.74
To: coins@cobra.uni.edu
CC:
Subj: BOGGS IS OKAY WITH ME

Date: Thu, 02 Jun 1994 14:11:56 -0700
From: Michael Edward Marotta <mercury@well.sf.ca.us>
Subject: BOGGS IS OKAY WITH ME
To: coins@cobra.uni.edu
Resent-Message-Id: <01HD2MNF41US8WZFUB@cobra.uni.edu>
Message-Id: <199406022111.OAA18810@well.sf.ca.us>
X-Envelope-To: ERHARD@cgi.COM, HOMREN@cgi.COM
X-Vms-To: IN%"coins@cobra.uni.edu"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7BIT
Comments: Coins Mailing List

This originally appeared in NUMISMATIC NEWS as a letter
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Thank you for "Money artist Boggs is featured on PBS show" (August 3). J.S.G. Boggs is being looted because he has something of value. The Treasury officials want his works of art for the same reason that Hermann Goering plundered the museums of France. When you don't produce, you have to steal. The T-men can find play money similes of American banknotes in variety stores and discount toy stores. The stuff sells for a few dollars to the millions. Obviously, there is no incentive in confiscating these replicas.

It so happens that the day I received Numismatic News, I also got a reminder to order more checks. In honor of Boggs, I picked a new design for myself: Currency, a green-on-green with fancy engraving, dominated by the traditional banknote numeral "1." Of course, as nice as they look, they are not original works of art, and so there is no incentive for the T-men to add them to the assets of their bankrupt government.

<signed>
Michael E. Marotta
Fowlerville, Mich.


+----------+
|"Moneta radix omni virtu est." | Michael E. Marotta |
| Alixa Rhodaflora 63 BC | mercury@well.com |
+----------+

From: SMTP%"ana@athena.csdco.com" 9-JUL-1994 17:07:43.09
To: coins@cobra.uni.edu
CC:
Subj: Boggs

Date: Sat, 09 Jul 1994 13:37:20 -0600 (MDT)
From: ANA <ana@athena.csdco.com>
Subject: Boggs
Sender: ANA <ana@athena.csdco.com>
To: coins@cobra.uni.edu
Reply-To: ANA <ana@athena.csdco.com>
Resent-Message-Id: <01HEI84LTLH08XBYJ4@cobra.uni.edu>
Message-Id: <Pine.3.88.9407081700.B11157-0100000@athena.csdco.com>
X-Envelope-To: ERHARD@cgi.COM, HOMREN@cgi.COM
X-Vms-To: IN%"coins@cobra.uni.edu"
Mime-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; CHARSET=US-ASCII
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7BIT
Comments: Coins Mailing List

AMERICAN NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 6, 1994

CONTACT: Stephen L. Bobbitt

"MONEY ARTIST" J.S.G. BOGGS SIGNS ON
FOR ANA WORLD'S FAIR OF MONEY IN DETROIT

Internationally renowned "money artist" J.S.G. Boggs will bring his art -- hand painted "money" -- to Detroit for the American Numismatic Association (ANA) World's Fair of MoneyR, July 27 - 31, 1994.

Boggs is respected and suspected for his intricate and detailed trompe l'oeil paintings of what appear to be real paper money but are no more than "Boggs' bills," the currency of his livelihood. Collectors -- both of art and numismatics -- covet his individual and personalized art work, while government officials -- in the United States, England and Australia -- are none too pleased with his skill and craftsmanship.

Featured in The New York Times, London's Sunday Times, The New Yorker, People, CBS's Sunday Morning and PBS's Nova programs, Boggs has found his art work confiscated by the U.S. Secret Service and has been arrested in both Australia and England for exchanging his "Boggs' bills" for merchandise and services.

A Woodbury, New Jersey, native who grew up in Tampa, Florida, and now

resides in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Boggs is a Fellow of Art and Ethics at the Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

He also is an artist who chanced upon his medium by accident. A young, modern artist fascinated by the form of numbers and letters, Boggs found his doodling on a restaurant napkin was accepted as $1 payment for his 90-cent coffee and doughnut.

With oversized "Boggs' bills" suspended over his booth on the bourse floor at Cobo Hall in Detroit, the artist will perform his art and issue his own souvenir cards in much the same way the official government money printer -- the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing -- will show off its abilities and real money.

In addition, Boggs plans to ply the streets of Detroit, seeking "buyers" of his art. All who meet this unique artist are intrigued, some are taken aback by his exchange offers -- "Boggs' bills" for goods and services -- and a few are fortunate to recognize his talents and buy his works.

For those just seeking his signature, including his autograph across his likeness on the cover of the May issue of The Numismatist, Boggs will be at his table from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 30. For an opportunity to hear him discuss the trials of his art, Boggs will appear in the free Numismatic Theatre presentation entitled "Art and Money" at 2 p.m. on Saturday in Room 66 of Cobo Hall.

For more information about the ANA World's Fair of Money in Detroit, contact the American Numismatic Association, 818 North Cascade Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3279; telephone 719/632-2646; fax 719/634-4085; Prodigy NUMI99A; CompuServe 74212,554; Internet anapub@athena.csdco.com.

University Museum
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Sutton Hall
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1087

(412) 357-7930

IUP

August 8, 1994

Mr. Wayne Homren
1810 Antietum Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

RE: J.S.G. Boggs
Limited Edition "Indiana" Bill

Dear Wayne:

As we discussed, I am enclosing an artist's proof of the special edition "Indiana" Boggs Bill. This Bill should be signed with your signature in the lower left hand corner as "United State Treasurer of Art" and returned to me for framing. It will be returned to you in approximately two weeks. Your contribution to the University Museum in the amount of $100.00 will be appreciated. Please make your check payable to "Foundation for IUP". The cost of framing is $20.00, therefore, your contribution will be tax deductible to the extent of $80.00.

Also enclosed is my introduction to the J.S.G. Boggs performance "The Magic Money Machine". As you will note, I think of myself as a speaker rather than a writer, however, I find this subject incredibly fascinating.

I hope we have an opportunity to meet sometime in the near future. Until then, best of luck to you and your efforts!

With Regards,

MYRON HAY TOMB

Enclosure
bm94045

Dear Wayne -
I wanted to get this off to you before I left on vacation — But, I have been tearing apart my house and office and can't get locate the bills - They are here somewhere + I'll keep looking. Be Patient - MYRON

Aug. 12, 1994

Hi Wayne,

Thanks so very much for sending the material on Boggs. You have done quite a good job of keeping tabs on him, as we all should. I for one feel we in the paper money end of things have to know as much about him as we can, because he's ours, now, working on such things. Why should we have to wait until it's older news before gathering it and letting others know what's going on? I can only imagine how much we would have liked to know more about some of the characters of bygone years who were then or became famous later on. That's one reason I write about him in BNR and try to keep up as much as I can on material written on him and what he's doing generally.

I had a 21/2 hour conversation with him after the ANA banquet- that was quiite a session! We would have gone on longer except that the hour was already so late and we both had to get up early- him for his table, me for my early flight home. But I really learned a great deal more about him, and his overwhelming need to do his art.

Anyway many thanks once again. It wasa good seeing you at the ANA. Best regards,

Neil

And many thanks for the photos!

# Dinner, Dessert and J.S.G. Boggs

Wayne K. Homren
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*This is one of a series of articles documenting the author's meetings with "Money Artist" J.S.G. Boggs. The first, "A Collector's Encounter with J.S.G. Boggs" (The Numismatist, May 1994) described the work "Moneta Electronica" and two other "Boggs bills" issued in the fall of 1993. This essay revolves around "Rebelbux", a special-edition print of Boggs' rendition of the famous Indian Princess Confederate five dollar note.*

## Honk Three Times

On a hot and humid Pittsburgh Friday afternoon, I inch my car through South Side rush-hour traffic. I turn onto Carson Street and drive past block after block of Victorian storefronts. At the turn of the century this street bustled with neighborhood millworkers and their families. By the late 70's it was half deserted. Now it's thriving again, filled with shoppers and restaurantgoers from around the city. The streetscape seems to change almost monthly as random buildings are renovated for some new purpose, one trendy shop or bar replacing last year's trendy establishment. Neon signs abound.

Turning on 21st Street, I see that workers have started to remove the rusting railroad tracks that run straight up the middle of the broad street. A vital link in the industrial age, the long-dormant rails host only weeds and trash. Following the line to its terminus four blocks away, I come to the hulking remains of two old buildings. The first one sports an enormous clock, visible for miles around. It once advertised the product made within: Duquesne Beer. Now the face is painted a solid grey color and the twenty-foot hands hang limp at a permanent 6:30. Recalling an old joke, I note that the broken clock is still right twice a day.

The second building is older. Carved in stone above the doorways are the words "Brew House". In its day I'll bet the smell of fermenting beer would have been sufficient to announce the building's purpose. I pull my car between the buildings and park. On the dirty brick wall in front of me is a peeling plywood door. A faded sign faintly announces "Freight Elevator". A padlock secures the opening against the curious.

To the right of the freight door is flight of concrete steps leading to a dark doorway. A hand-lettered sign reads "This door must be kept closed at all times!" The paper is bright. Too new to have been tacked to the door for long, it's the first sign of life in an otherwise bleak landscape.

The digital clock on my dashboard reads 6:00; I'm right on time. As instructed, I honk the horn three times. I soon hear a voice, saying something I just can't quite understand. I get out of the car and look up, finally spotting a head poking out of a fourth-floor window far above the street. It's Boggs. "I can't hear you," I yell.

"I'LL - BE - RIGHT- DOWN!!" he shouts, and this time it registers. I make a circle with my right thumb and forefinger and shout back "O - K!". I mentally add "doorbell" to my list of modern conveniences worth having.

**Brew House Battle**

Before long Boggs appears in the doorway and we exchange greetings. He's been very busy packing. Fellow artist Caroline Sykora moved to New Jersey just this week, where she'll be a graduate student in Art at Rutgers University. Boggs himself is packing a lot of stuff for shipment to his Florida studio.

As we get in the car I mention that I hadn't seen the buildings in daylight before. I hadn't actually realized there were two separate buildings. "Yeah, they're connected by a walkway." I look up to see a dirty aluminum-sheathed walkway hovering precariously over the street at about 3rd-floor level. "It's full of pigeon shit" he noted.

Boggs should know - he's been all though the buildings. He and a group of artist-tenants have been working for years to improve the site and set up an artist's colony. Now owned by the City, it has been run by various managers, none of whom has been terribly tolerant of the artists or appreciative of their efforts to fix up a building they don't even own. The group has removed tons of trash from in and around the building, and made many sections very livable despite the remaining overall sense of squalor.

Caroline was particularly disappointed. After spending a great deal of time and energy fixing up a studio, the powers that be assigned it to someone else. Now Boggs is being threatened with eviction himself. He doesn't want to move and his lawyers are fighting it, but just in case he's getting ready to travel light. A truck arrives Wednesday to haul the first batch of stuff to Florida. It's a sad time for him.

## From Stale Popcorn to Triple Chocolate

But tonight we'll have some fun. We're meeting a couple of friends for dinner at a place called Gullifty's in Squirrel Hill. Squirrel Hill is another vibrant neighborhood near Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Pittsburgh, and Schenley Park, the largest of the city's parks. The mix of shops, apartments, houses, and mansions is home to many professionals and students connected to the nearby universities and hospitals. Dotted with synagogues, the predominantly Jewish area is a melting pot of classes and cultures.

The restaurant represents one renovation effort that worked. In my high school days, the building housed the Guild Theater, home of Marx Brothers festivals and killer double features (imagine "On the Waterfront" and "From Here to Eternity" back-to-back). Moviegoers worried that the ceiling might cave in one day, but came anyway for the cheap entertainment.

Nowadays the primary entertainment is people-watching. They come for dinner or snacks, but rarely leave without ordering dessert. A Gullify's specialty, rich pies and cakes tantalize waiting diners as they revolve in a refrigerated display case.

## The Party Forms

Boggs and I take seats next to the dessert showcase to await our dinner companions Pete Costulis and Cathy Rivi. Pete has met Boggs before - he's a mechanical engineer by trade, but a composer of music at heart. We've been best friends since high school. Cathy Rivi is a technical writer and mutual friend. She's the first to arrive and I introduce her to Boggs.

I'd told Cathy about my previous encounters with Boggs and she was glad to finally meet him. We chatted for a while and got onto the subject of his next projects. Bringing his art to cyberspace, Boggs will make some special versions of his notes available via the Internet. Boggs will change the notes regularly - Wednesday's version may be different from Friday's version.

Realizing we'd be more comfortable at a table, the three of us were soon seated. Before long Pete joined us, wearing his "Walking Encyclopedia of Movies" T-shirt. Boggs quizzed him with a question - "Who starred in "A Fine Madness?" "Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward". "Nope." After a few wrong guesses he corrected his original

response - it was Sean Connery and Joanne Woodward. It was one of Boggs' favorite films, about a woman-chasing poet struggling to complete his master work.

## The Muzik Biz

Pete has a complete electronic music studio at home, and in recent years he's composed a number of original instrumental works. He's been searching for an agent to represent him with music publishing companies. Boggs asked him about the type of music, but with its roots in classical, jazz, and rock styles, it's hard to define. Some might call it "New Age" but that label doesn't do it justice. The artist whose work is closest to Pete's is a woman named Susan Ciani. If he had to pick a recording company which best fits his work, it would be Windham Hill. "But they've gotten so big now that they don't listen to unsolicited demo tapes. That's why I'm searching for a agent to represent me."

Boggs was sympathetic, but said the best route to exposure is airplay. And to get airplay you need two things: a demo CD and personal contact with a DJ who plays similar music. Pete had already investigated making a CD but hadn't taken the plunge yet.

Boggs had once been a promoter for rock bands. He told us how he'd managed to introduce one band to an executive of Rocket Records, Elton John's recording company. "I knew that the guy just loved The Police. So I took one of my band's CD's and labeled the case something like 'CONFIDENTIAL: Advanced Studio Copy - new Police album'. I heard he went nuts when he saw it and listened to it immediately." Despite the slight-of-hand, the band got a recording gig.

Boggs got out of the promotion business after getting fed up with the unreliability of rock musicians, who rarely showed up as planned, not even for events crucial to their careers. "I found myself having to explain to the business people, 'Well, Paul's still hung over from Tuesday, Phil is in detox, and Nigel's at the free clinic getting a shot. And I can't play anything.'"

## The Terrible Two

Boggs has a mischievous streak. He recalled one lecture to a group of young CMU art students. Early in the lecture he noted that one collector was trying to

complete a set of his early "number" paintings. He wanted a "2" to complete the series and offered to pay Boggs $10,000 for one. Having moved on to other subjects, he wasn't interested, but said "if I ever go back to that kind of thing, I'll let you know."

During the lecture Boggs proceeded to draw a stylized numeral two on the chalkboard. Before finishing, he noted that art supply stores carry a product that will "fix" chalk to a surface when sprayed from a foot or so away. He concluded the lecture and left without erasing the board.

**Rebelbux**

After dinner we eyed the dessert menu. Pete ordered the Triple Chocolate Cake, and shared a bite with Cathy. Saying the chocolate looked "dangerous", Boggs opted for sharing some of my Carrot Cake.

After clearing the plates, it was time to complete a new Boggs work. He opened the manilla envelope he'd brought with him to the restaurant. In it was a small group of special intaglio art prints of the Confederate Indian Princess note Boggs created for the 1994 Memphis paper money show. The regular issue was a set of 100 prints on 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper. These special edition prints are a separate series of just 20 pressed deeply into small sheets of extra thick rag paper. Boggs individually tinted the notes in various patterns. Several he deemed not "good enough" were held back to be used someday as part of larger collage works. The remaining ones were for sale at $425.

I had picked out my favorite before we left the Brew House earlier in the evening - Number 14. The note had a pinkish cast, which contrasted well with the white paper border. The seal was in red, and the vignettes were dabbled in green.

"Should I sign your name, or would you like to do it?" Boggs asked. I said I'd sign, and he handed me a pen. I placed the note gingerly on the back of the thick menu. Trying too hard to be neat, I signed my name in the "for Register" place. Boggs then added "Pgh, PA." beneath my name, and fashioned a serial number out of the date and print number. August 12, 1994 became "1289414" He then wrote his name out in full in the "for Treasurer" place: James Stephen George Boggs.

Now we had to pick a name. Other owners had chosen names like "Ghost Money", "Faded Glory", and "Old Friends". Hmmm. Boggs listened as the rest of us tossed around some ideas. Since I call my moonlight book business "Rebellion Numismatics" I suggested "Rebel something" as another option. "Rebel Bucks" came up

and we all agreed. Boggs wrote "Rebelbux" on a placemat and the name was born. He rewrote it on the bottom border of the paper. Turning the note over he completed the work by adding "@ Gullify's, Pgh PA." on the back.

## Parking Lot Deals

Boggs stepped out front for an after-dinner smoke, then met me in the back parking lot to complete our dealings. I owed him for "Rebelbux" and a few other things. I had some books to trade in the trunk of my car: a copy of Frankenstein's After the Hunt, and two copies of Griffith's Story of American Bank Note Company. After totalling everything up, I owed Boggs $76 and started writing him a check. "How come you always end up owing Boggs money?" Pete asked mischievously.

"I'm not sure why I buy all these books" Boggs told Cathy. "I can't read them". Afflicted with three forms of dyslexia, Boggs can read just a few sentences at a time. "I like the pictures," he grinned, turning inside out the standby excuse of Playboy magazine readers.

Giving Cathy a parting kiss on the cheek, Boggs bid her and Pete adieu. "Gee, I never got a kiss," I complained, backing away just in case Boggs tried to remedy the situation. We climbed back into my car for the return trip to the South Side.

## Deja Vu

Before dropping him off, I had to ask Boggs about a book I'd come across earlier in the week. Using the University of Pittsburgh online catalog, I located a book by Dennis Haseley called The Counterfeiter. Published in 1987, it was targeted for teenage boys. The plot synopsis stopped me cold: "James, a sixteen-year-old artist, tries to create a perfect five hundred dollar bill." I located the book on a shelf in another library across campus. The standard disclaimer stated "Any resemblance to actual persons or events is purely coincidental..." I read the first three chapters before the library closed for the evening.

Boggs had never heard of the book. But had the author ever heard of Boggs? A research question for another time. After pulling up the Brew House doorstep, we said our goodbyes and Boggs hurried into the building. Lots of work remains to be done. ②